

to approval of the contract, unless a waiver was granted by the State Conservationist or the Designated Conservationist prior to the installation of the practice.

(e) Where new technologies or conservation practices that show high potential for optimizing environmental benefits are available, NRCS may approve interim conservation practice standards and financial assistance for pilot work to evaluate and assess the performance, efficacy, and effectiveness of the technology or conservation practices.

(f) NRCS will set the minimum level of treatment within land management practices at the national level; however, the State Conservationist may supplement specific criteria to meet localized conditions within the State or areas.

§ 1469.9 Technical assistance.

(a) NRCS may use the services of NRCS-approved or certified Technical Service Providers in performing its responsibilities for technical assistance.

(b) Technical assistance may include, but is not limited to: Assisting applicants during sign-up, processing and assessing applications, assisting the participant in developing the conservation stewardship plan; conservation practice survey, layout, design, installation, and certification; information, education, and training for producers; and quality assurance activities.

(c) NRCS retains approval authority over the certification of technical assistance done by non-NRCS personnel.

(d) NRCS retains approval authority of the conservation stewardship contracts and contract payments.

(e) Conservation stewardship plans will be developed by NRCS certified conservation planners.

Subpart B—Contracts and Payments

§ 1469.20 Application for contracts.

(a) Applications must include:

(1) A completed self-assessment workbook;

(2) Benchmark condition inventory and conservation stewardship plan in accordance with §1469.7 for the eligible

land uses on the entire operation or, if Tier I, for the portion being enrolled;

(3) Any other requirements specified in the sign-up notice;

(4) For Tier I, clear indication of which acres the applicant wishes to enroll in the CSP; and,

(5) A certification that the applicant will agree to meet the relevant contract requirements outlined in the sign-up notice.

(b) Producers who are members of a joint operation, trust, estate, association, partnership or similar organization must file a single application for the joint operation or organization.

(c) Producers can submit only one application per sign-up.

(d) Participants can only have one active contract at any one time.

§ 1469.21 Contract requirements.

(a) To receive payments, each participant must enter into a conservation stewardship contract and comply with its provisions. Among other provisions, the participant agrees to maintain at least the level of stewardship identified in the benchmark inventory for the portion of land being enrolled for the entire contract period, as appropriate, and implement and maintain any new practices or activities required in the contract.

(b) Program participants will only receive payments from one conservation stewardship contract.

(c) CSP participants must address the following requirements or additional resource concerns to the minimum level of treatment by the end of their conservation stewardship contract:

(1) Tier I contract requirement: additional practices and activities as included by the applicant in the conservation stewardship plan and approved by NRCS, over the part of the agricultural operation enrolled in CSP.

(2) Tier II contract requirements:

(i) Address an additional locally significant resource concern, as described in section III of the NRCS FOTG over the entire agricultural operation. Applicants may satisfy this requirement by demonstrating that the locally significant resource concern is not applicable to their operation or that they